



# FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *MICHIGAN*

A Non-Profit Organization of Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, Prosecutors, and Crime Survivors Fighting to Prevent Crime by Investing in Children

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State Director

## **Testimony presented to the House Committee on Family & Children Services on HB 5110 by Byron Konschuh, Lapeer County Prosecutor and member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan, September 20, 2005.**

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Byron Konschuh. I am the prosecutor for Lapeer County and a member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan. I'm here today with our state director, K.P. Pelleran, to support HB 5110. However, before I get into that, I also want share the report that was an outcome of H.R. 26 that I testified in support of before this very committee in February 2003. I bring the report to your attention for those of you who may not be aware of it. One of the goals in the MASI Report is to "Develop state structures and policies that support quality after-school programming." HB 5110 falls within that goal.

In the hour after the bell rings, when hundreds of thousands of children and teens are turned out on the street with neither constructive activities nor adult supervision, violent juvenile crime soars and the prime time for juvenile crime begins. The peak hours for such crime are from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. These are also the hours when kids are most likely to become victims of crime. Being unsupervised after school doubles the risk that 8th-graders will smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs.

Quality youth development programs can cut crime immediately and transform this prime time for juvenile crime into hours of academic enrichment, wholesome fun and community service. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids wants to make certain that these programs are accessible to kids. HB 5110 leads us in the right direction.

Last year, Fight Crime met with licensing and program staff at the Department of Human Services to share our concerns regarding roadblocks to serving kids in after-school programs and in utilizing supplemental opportunities for federal food programs. The Department agreed to establish a work group of various stakeholders from the public and private sectors to address these concerns. We worked closely with staff at OCAL, the Department of Education, representatives from mentor communities that included Grand Rapids, the Detroit area and the Flint area, and other stakeholders. HB 5110 is a product of that work group.

Current law requires after-school programs that serve kids through age 17 to be licensed child day care centers. It also requires a school-operated program to be licensed for four years and then allowed to be exempt from licensure. This bill would apply to school-age

children and defines a "school-age" child to be younger than 13 years of age. Also, the bill calls for two years of licensure after which a program, if they wish, could choose to remain licensed with inspections or apply for an exemption from the inspections and on-site visits required under section 5 of the Child Day Care Act. Again, the program would remain licensed if it were granted the exemption from inspection with the caveat that it annually submit documentation demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the Act. This would allow for local control and oversight of the program while opening doors to funding streams for state and federal program funds such as the state-wide competitive after-school program, the federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Center funds, and the federal snack and supper program. Any willful or substantial violations of the Act would allow the Department of Human Services to rescind the license.

At the same time, clubs and youth organizations with single-purpose programs where participants are in a specific training and can come and go at will, are not required to hold a child day care license.

These provisions are a vast improvement over the current law. The new language maintains high standards of safety for school-age students, while providing state oversight, local control, and opportunities for parents to have a choice in the structure of the facility or program for their children. At the same time, the measure allows greater flexibility for teen programs.

We believe that HB 5110 will help to maintain program quality and accessibility to students across Michigan. We urge your support of this measure. Thank you.

**Summary:**

- Defines "school-age" child to be younger than 13 years of age (currently 17)
- All programs would remain licensed (including previously licensed or approved programs)
- Exempts single-purpose programs like clubs, scouts, and youth organizations where kids come and go at will
- Allows for local control and oversight of the program
- Opens doors to state and federal program funds
- Maintains high standards of safety for school-age students
- Maintains program quality and accessibility to students – closes down the "prime time for juvenile crime"